



Language Arts Lesson Plans
DeeGee Lester, Education Director

The Parthenon offers unparalleled opportunities for teachers to combine museum field trips and writing strategies. The Parthenon and ancient Greek culture are so closely linked to philosophy, critical thinking, theater, mythology, the Romantic poets, and other important topics in language arts that the potential for using this unique structure to awaken literary excitement in students presents a golden opportunity for area teachers.

Lesson One:

The Roots of Words

Goal:

The learner will discover the ancient roots of many modern English words and gain an awareness of the history of language.

Background:

Many ancient civilizations advanced communication and the written word through the use of symbols and pictures, but the ancient Greeks added *vowels*. More important, the Greeks laid the founda-

Puzzlers

Find the two root words that combine to answer the questions

- A branch of science
- An author creates this about another person.
- Someone in New York needs this to talk to someone in Nashville.
- I need a telescope to study this.

tions and established high standards with the writing of the first histories, travel guides, plays, heroic tales, philosophical writings, and mathematical and scientific theorems.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will know:

- How the Greek language influenced our own.
- How to use the dictionary to trace the genealogy of words.
- How building a vocabulary can be fun.

TN. Standards: 6.1.spi.1; 7.2.spi.2.

Activities:

1. *Exploring “roots.”* Look over this list of Greek root words and their meanings:

acro (highest)	cracy (rule by)	mono (one)
agra (farm)	demo (people)	nomy (rules for
anthro (human)	geo (earth)	management of,
arch (chief)	graph (write)	laws of)
aristo (best)	hydro (water)	ophy , (knowledge of
astro (star)	ist (one who does	optikos (see)
auto (self)	something,	philo (love)
	“violinist”)	phon (speak)
bio (life)	logy (study of)	polis (city-state)
chromo (color)	meter, metron (to	psyche (soul)
chrono (time)	measure)	techne (skill, art)
cosmos (world)	micro (small)	tele (far)

See how many words you can put together from the list.



More Fun!! Write your name in Greek

Visit <http://silentq.unicyclist.com/YourNameInGreek.html/>

Explore how other ancient nations communicated

Link to www.VirtualEgypt.com

Click at the top of the page to create a custom cartouche of your name or a phrase. Next, return to the home page and scroll down the left side to learn the history of hieroglyphics or write English words in hieroglyphics.

2. *Explore the dictionary.*

Take any page in the dictionary and explore not only the definitions of the words, but also the roots of each word, located at the end of the definition. Gk represents

Greek, Lat. represents Latin. Fr. represents France. etc.

Lesson Two:

Exploring Myths

Goal:

The learner will understand what a myth is and the role of mythology throughout history.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will know:

- The meaning of the word, myth.
- The role of mythology in the ancient, preliterate world.
- The elements of myth.
- How myth relates to our modern world.
- How to write a myth.

TN. Standards: 6.1.tpi.3; 6.1.tpi.23; 6.2.tpi.4; 6.2.tpi.9; 7.2.tpi.11; 8.1.spi.23; 8.2.spi.10.

Activities:

1. *What is a myth?* Allow students time to give their definitions of the word, myth; then using several dictionaries, look up the definition. Do dictionaries agree on the definition or are there slight variations? Ask the class to agree on one definition.
2. *What was the role of mythology in the ancient, preliterate world?* Divide students into teams for a visit to the library. Ask each team to look at the mythology from a specific area (African, Greek, Irish, Roman, Native American, etc.) and select a favorite myth. In a report to the class, each team should explain the importance of this myth, focusing on the following questions: a) Does it focus on human nature or natural phenomenon? b) Does it focus on the nation's religious heritage or history or a combination? c) Does it focus on humans, monsters or deities? d) If human, is the central figure heroic? e) What is the quest or goal of the hero? f) What do monsters represent in the myth? g) What does the myth tell us about the values and beliefs of the people? h) Why would there be several versions of the same myth? **After the team presentations, discuss similarities between the myths of the different countries or regions. Are there stories, characters or situations that are similar regardless of the distance between these countries?**
3. *What are the elements of myth?* Look again at the stories and team reports. On the board start a list of the elements that appear similarly in the stories. (Examples may be a creation story, the presence of half-animal/half-human creatures, the similarity of duties for the gods and goddesses, the sorts of duties assigned to each deity, the heroic quest, the challenges heroes face, etc.).
4. *How does mythology relate to our modern world?* We are all familiar with what happened in "a galaxy far, far away." Many popular movies ("Star Wars," "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, "Oh, Brother, Where Art Thou?" and the Indiana Jones trilogy) are based on mythical tales or follow mythological

structures (quest, challenge, good versus evil, a specified series of steps to reach a goal, etc.). Pick your favorite from these films and answer the following: 1) Who is the hero of the tale? 2) What is his quest? 3) What are the challenges he must overcome? 4) Are there a specific series of steps to be followed? 5) Who assists him on his journey? 6) Is this a fight between good and evil? 7) Does he triumph in the end? (This exercise can also be applied to many video games).

5. *Write a myth.* Now that students have explored a variety of myths and many of the elements of myth, ask them to create a myth. Students may work in teams or individually. They may use existing mythological characters, deities and monsters or create their own. They may focus on how natural phenomenon – rainbows, stars, thunder, etc.- were created, on the heroic quest, on the struggle of good versus evil, etc. They may set their story in ancient times or even in the future. Particularly artistic students may create a storyboard for their myth while other students may wish to simply write the story. Students may wish to review elements of good storytelling – plot, character, setting, etc. – and submit an outline before writing the myth.

Lesson Three: *Descriptive Journal Writing*

Goal: The learner will understand the importance of observation in journal writing.

Objectives: As a result of this lesson the learner will know

- How to utilize the senses in observation
- How to balance observation and notation skills
- How to incorporate sketches in the journal text
- How to combine and polish these elements in the journal entry

TN. Standards: 6.2.tpi.16: 7.2.tpi.16;8.2.spi.18; grades 9-12: *write for a variety of purposes such as description...and personal, creative expression.*

Background:

Historians, naturalists, writers and poets used journals to record their personal reactions to historical events, nature, the “built” environment, art, and personal journeys through life. The names of Thomas Jefferson, Lord Byron, Theodore Roosevelt, Meriwether Lewis, John Keats, and Henry David Thoreau are included among those who kept personal journals to record their thoughts and reactions. This activity provides skill development in the use of observation and creative writing as well as drawing/design.

Activities:

- 1). *How do we use our senses in observation?* We tend to look without really seeing. We pass objects and scenes every day without noticing them. We visit historic sites and museums and beautiful natural settings and miss so much that each has to offer. Prior to your field trip to the Parthenon or any other museum or historic site, ask students to test their powers of

observation. Using a familiar site (home, school, neighborhood), ask students to see the site with “new eyes.” What sights, smells, tastes, sounds, and textures do they notice that they may have missed before? Ask them to name one or two *discoveries* they made about this familiar place. Ask which of the senses was most important in making this discovery. Ask them to look at the site from a different and unfamiliar vantage point. Ask if this discovery changed their perception of the familiar site.

Observation Tip: When looking at and describing an object, first describe the object in its entirety, then imagine the object split into eighths or fourths and describe each section.

- 2). *How do we write and observe simultaneously?* Students accustomed to in-class note taking often try to write down *everything* during an observation activity. There is a tendency to carry a *huge* notebook and spend more time writing than observing, along with the tendency to focus on sight only while ignoring all other sensory perception (sound, texture, etc.). In balancing writing and observing, students are encouraged to follow these guidelines: a) *Respect the building or site.* NEVER use the walls or floors as a “desk” to support your notebook while writing and NEVER use a pen or markers in a museum. Take a pencil for this exercise. b) *Small is better.* Forget the big notebook. A small hand-size notebook is better because it is easier to hold, its size discourages massive writing, and it fits easily into a purse or pocket. **Remember, the Parthenon does not allow backpacks.** c). *Students should NOT spend their time writing their entries on site*, but in taking time to *really* observe their surroundings, make *quick* notations (words, phrases, feelings, etc.), all of which can be polished later into journal form.
- 3). *Sketches reinforce memory.* Students need not be artists to include quick sketches into their journals. None of the historic personalities listed in the introduction to this section were trained artists. However, many of these men included quick sketches in their journals. During a visit to the Parthenon, a quick sketch of the Ionic capital, a gryphon, the egg and dart design, the entasis feature of the columns, etc., can reinforce memory and add interest and visual impact to the journal entry. A quick sketch in a tiny notebook can, like the text, be polished later in final journal form.
- 4). *Combining observation and writing skills in a journal entry.* Your journal entry should reflect *your* personal reaction to the Parthenon. Sights, feelings, phrases, words, and sketches combine to provide a record of your visit and a reinforcement of the impact of this beautiful structure upon your life. As a result of this exercise you may discover the value of

journaling in your own life as a way of expressing your innermost feelings, exploring new experiences and challenges, and recording your emotional and intellectual development.

Lesson Four: *The Romantic Poets*

Goal:

The learner will understand the appeal of the Romantic Poets and their impact upon late 18th and early 19th century culture.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will know:

- That the Romantic Poets were part of a larger Neo-Classical movement.
- That the poets were heavily influenced by classical Greek and Roman art, architecture, and mythology as well as contemporary events such as the Greek fight for independence and the removal and transporting of Greek treasures.
- That the Romantic Poets used their medium (poetry) to enlighten, up-lift and scold, and to influence public opinion and ideals.

TN. Reading Standards for Grades 9-12: Discern the purposes, main ideas, biases, points of view, and persuasive devices found in various texts; Read, interpret, and respond in a variety of ways to various genres; Respond to literature by making personal, historical, and visual connections; Recognize the influence of an author's background, gender, environment, audience, and experience on a literary work.

Activities:

1. *What was the Neo-Classical Movement?* Ask students to find the definition of the word, *neo-classical* and determine the time period when Neo-classicalism was at its zenith. Then allow students to **select a word or phrase from the following list and determine how it contributed to the furthering of the neo-classical movement:** a) the philosophy of Enlightenment, b) the “Grand Tour” of Europe by the wealthy, c) the increase in the number of museums, d) the export of antiquities, e) the emphasis on “classical education” among the upper classes, f) the weakening of the Ottoman empire, g) the American experiment in democracy, h) the emphasis on classical *Greek Revival* architecture, especially in the United States, i) the British Empire. To complete this task, students may refer to history textbooks or conduct a word search on the Internet. **As an alternative, students may select one (non-poet) character from history and explore how one or more of the above terms influenced that person and their role in history.** (An excellent choice is Thomas Jefferson to whom a, b, e, g, and h easily apply.)
2. *Exploring poetry.* Make a list of Romantic poets – Byron, Keats, etc.; then visit the library and find examples of how the Romantic poets described the Greek War for Independence, Classical art and

architecture, and the Elgin Marble Controversy, as well as how these poets incorporated Greek and Roman mythology into their works. (When using the library for this exercise, you may search for the poet and refine the search using any of the above words as a search tool).

3. *Using poetry to influence others.* Read Lord Byron's poems, "Childe Harold" and "The Curse of Minerva." While reading these poems, see if you can identify at least five personal attacks leveled at Lord Elgin by the poet. Do you think Lord Byron was attempting to influence the opinions and reactions of Lord Elgin, political and popular opinion in Britain, or the rest of the world?

Lesson Five:

Join An International Debate: Developing and Supporting an Argument

Goal:

The learner will develop critical thinking skills through the process of exploring evidence, forming an opinion, and developing and supporting their argument.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will know:

- The arguments for and against the question, ***Should the Elgin Marbles be returned to Greece?***
- How to use research tools such as articles, books, and Internet sites.
- How to weigh evidence and form an opinion on a controversial topic.
- How to write an opinion or argument.
- How to use claims, supports, and warrants in support of their opinion.

TN. Writing Standards for grades 9-12: Write frequently of a variety of purposes such as ...persuasion; Develop organized writing containing focused, well-developed ideas; Research information from various sources to prepare presentations, reports or papers which use summarizing, paraphrasing, direct quotes, citations for sources, and bibliographic entries.

Activity:

Students will address the question, ***Should the Elgin Marbles be returned to Greece?*** After using a variety of sources for exploring arguments for and against the return of the marbles, the students build and support an argument based on familiarity with and analysis of competing views. In order to gain research experience, students should be required to use at least three types of resources on the subject (these may include articles, books, speeches, government documents, and the Internet). Students may begin by researching books and articles, newspapers, and government documents (often on microfilm) in the library. In addition, students may explore the pros and cons of this issue as well as the universal issue of the repatriation of artifacts by accessing web sites using key

words such as “Elgin Marbles,” “Elgin Marble Controversy,” “Repatriation of Objects/Artifacts,” “NAGPRA,” “African Repatriation Movement,” etc. After researching *both sides* of the argument, students make their own decisions regarding whether the Elgin Marbles should stay at the British Museum or be returned to Athens, Greece. The students state and support their *claim* or position using *support* (factual evidence, precedence, appeals to values) and *warrants* (based on credibility of sources, reliability of factual evidence, and the needs and values of the audience).

An excellent book about building and supporting an argument is Annette T. Rottenberg’s *Elements of Argument*, 2nd edition (NY: A Bedford Book, 1988).

Lesson Plans Corresponding with the Essential Literature Grades 9, 10, and 12

This portion focuses on epic poetry, drama and mythology readings included in the Essential Reading List.

9th Grade

Lesson Six: *Exploring the Epic Poem: The Odyssey by Homer*

Goal:

The learner will explore the genre of epic poetry with special regard to comprehension, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and appreciation of the ancient epic poem.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will meet 9th Grade Tennessee Language Arts Standards in the following ways:

- Understand the definition of “epic.”
- Explore features common to ancient epic poems.
- Develop an understanding of and respect for multicultural diversity in language use, patterns, and dialect.
- Identify and interpret literary elements and figurative language.
- Improve comprehension by interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating text.
- Discern the purposes, main ideas, biases, points of view, and persuasive devices found in the text.

Background:

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word **epic** as “an extended narrative poem in elevated or dignified language, celebrating the feats of a legendary or traditional hero.” Among the most recognized works in this genre are Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* (ancient Greek poems focusing on the Trojan War and its aftermath), and the Old English epic poem, *Beowulf*. The allegorical formula and the hero’s pursuit

of a goal through a series of challenges or tests is a hallmark of world literature from James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* to John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Movies such as the *Indiana Jones* series, *Star Wars*, and *Oh, Brother! Where Art Thou?* similarly follow the epic formula. Likewise, in reading history and biography, we continually see references to the role of heroes, real or mythical, as a major influential force in the lives of individuals, movements, and nations.

Homer's epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* share a number of features:

- 1) The presence of human frailties combined with the heroic characteristics of courage, resourcefulness, intelligence, skill, strength, and moral responsibility.
- 2) The depiction of a unified Greece.
- 3) Identical passages in both epic poems.
- 4) The utilization of allegorical formula, dreams and prophecies, the intervention of the gods, and the important role of deception in the action of the poem.

***The Odyssey* by Homer**

Activities:

- 1) The opening lines of the epic poem were called the *proem*. List some things explains to us.
- 2) Give examples of ways in which Odysseus reflected the heroic qualities (courage, resourcefulness, intelligence, skill, strength, and moral responsibility). What qualities do *you* think are necessary for hero status? Would Odysseus qualify as a hero according to your own standards?
- 3) Compare the first and second council of the gods.
- 4) How does Odysseus' description of himself compare with his wife's description?
- 5) What is allegory? Select and explain the allegorical significance of a character (or group of characters) in the poem.
- 6) Unlike the Judeo-Christian and other world religious traditions in which mortals seek God's involvement in their lives, the ancient Greeks preferred to be left alone by the gods. Give examples of the intervention of the gods in the lives of these people and whether the intervention was helpful or the cause of more problems?
- 7) Compare the beliefs of Telemachus and Zeus regarding the roles of the individual and of deities in the suffering of mankind. Which do you think is correct?
- 8) Analyse the roles of hospitality and morality in the poem?
- 9) What is the significance of the three songs sung by Demodokos?
- 10) What is the role of deception in the poem? How do Odysseus' lies and deception compare to the deception of the Trojan Horse in the *Iliad*?

Grade 9

Lesson Seven:

Exploring Mythology by Edith Hamilton

Goal:

The learner will understand the importance of mythology in world literature with regard to interpretation and appreciation for the genre.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson the learner will meet 9th Grade Tennessee Language Arts Standards in the following way:

- Explore features common to ancient myths.
- Explore the oral history tradition of myth as a way of developing an understanding and respect for multicultural, gender, and ethnic diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects.
- Use comprehensive strategies to enhance understanding, to make predictions, and to respond to literature.
- Use oral reading in individuals and groups.
- Identify and interpret literary elements and figurative language.

(*Mythology* by Edith Hamilton is part of the Essential Readings List for Metro Schools and is available for sale in the Parthenon gift shop).

Background:

Students and teachers may refresh their memory about mythology by referring back to activities in Lesson 2 of this web site.

A world-renowned classicist, Edith Hamilton (1868-1963) served as headmistress of the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, MD for over a quarter of a century. Following retirement, she began a career as a writer with an emphasis on ancient civilizations and mythology. In a 1957 ceremony King Paul of Greece named Hamilton an honorary citizen of Athens. Generations of readers consider Hamilton's *Mythology* the best translation of the ancient tales in terms of organization, accessibility and reading pleasure.

Activities:

1). Select two students and ask them to locate and read aloud two versions of the same myth. Afterward, ask the class to compare the two versions, noting similarities and differences. Which version does the class prefer? Why? Ask the class to discuss how various interpretations may have developed in an oral history tradition. Think about what factors (communication, geography, cultural changes, etc.) might contribute to the creation of various versions of a myth?

2). Ask students to discuss the role of oral history within their own families. Allow students to tell family stories that have been passed down from earlier generations. Do they believe these stories are true or have they been "improved" over the generations with retelling? Do different family members have variations of the same event? Why? How have these stories contributed to their own sense of "family" and family pride? (If students are unaware of any old family stories, ask them to interview an older relative about family stories that have been passed down through the generations and report to class).

3). Ask students to compare a Greek myth with myths from another cultures – Norse, Celtic (Irish), African, Native American, etc. List similarities of theme, characters, gods, tests, etc. Are there universal themes or characters that appear again and again in the mythologies of various cultures? .

4). After reading Edith Hamilton’s *Mythology*, write a short essay describing ways in which mythology reveals the history, religion, and culture of the ancient Greeks. Discuss these essays in class and ask students if they can think of examples of myth in American culture? What does myth contribute to literature and to our understanding of cultures?

Drama Background Grade 10 and Grade 12

The Essential Reading List for the high school level includes several Greek tragedies. The western concept of theater has its roots in Classical Greek culture and literature. The Greek word *drama*, means “word or act.” Theater sprang from religious festivals and the tradition of a chorus narrating choral songs or *dythorambs* honoring Dionysus. The leader of the chorus sang the verse and the entire chorus joined for the refrain. Choral hymns included both singing and dancing. In the evolution of the drama, the next major step was the addition of a prologue and the emergence in the fourth century B.C. of the first actor, Thespis, who stepped out from the all-male chorus to participate in a dialogue with the chorus. As the dialogue and story lines became complex, playwrights added characters.

Approximately sixty-seven Greek city-states had theaters. Performances of the plays took place during the day in large, open-air theaters. In order to obtain the best acoustical effect, the theater was built into a hillside with seats arranged in a steep, semi-circle along the hillside so that spectators looked down onto a circular floor called the *orchestra* (where the chorus performed). Behind the orchestra was a raised *skene* or hut from which entrances and exits were made onto the stage. The *skene* (from which we get our words scene and scenery) reflected the voices of the actors toward the audience. The use of masks also assisted in amplifying actors’ voices.

Performed only at festivals, the plays were an area of keen competition for playwrights who acted in their own productions until the time of Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.). Subject matter for the plays was universal in nature (jealousy, love, revenge, etc.), and the names of the dramatists – Aristophanes, Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus – are recognized around the world 2,500 years later.

The plays fell into three categories:

Tragedies: Serious plays focusing on gods and heroes brought down by a character flaw, misfortune, or fate. Watching tragedies unfold onstage, mankind saw their own vulnerabilities and the cruel realities of life. Tragedies began with a *prologue* preparing the audience for the action to follow. The *parados* was the choral entrance and was followed by the *episodia* or scenes of dialogue separated by choral songs called *stasima*.

Comedies: Like the comedies and television sitcoms of today, the ancient comedies laughed at and exaggerated life's predicaments, daily happenings, and familiar characters, such as politicians.

Satyr Play: Names for the mythical half-man, half-goat companions of Dionysus, the dialogue of the satyr play was colloquial, actions was rambunctious, and the tone of the play was mocking.

During the competition for tragedy, each playwright offered a series of three plays and a satyr. Only a handful of the plays remain in existence. For example, of the estimated 80-120 plays written by Sophocles, only seven are available to us today. Many of the plays that captured prizes are no longer in existence, but the level of excellence is revealed in the fact that Sophocles' masterpiece, *Oedipus Rex*, was only runner-up the year of its presentation.

(Source: Wesley Paine, Brad Forrister, eds., *Theatre Parthenos* (Nashville: Tennessee Humanities Council, 1987).

Grade 10

Lesson eight

Antigone by Sophocles

Goal:

The learner will use reading skills to comprehend, interpret, analyze, and appreciate one of the masterpieces of Greek drama.

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, the learner will meet 10th grade Tennessee Language Arts Standards in the following ways:

- Develop an understanding of and respect for multicultural, gender, and ethnic diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects.
- Use comprehension strategies to enhance understanding, to make predictions, and to respond to literature.
- Improve comprehension by interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating written text.
- Discern the purposes, main ideas, biases, points of view, and persuasive devices found in the text.
- Explore the elements of drama as a literary genre and examine the advantages and disadvantages of drama as a means of communication.
- Understand the strategies used in the production of Greek drama including the design of the theater, the introduction of elements such as the orchestra and masks, the benefit of the chorus and the choral song, etc.

Activities:

The philosophical aspects of tragedy cannot be underestimated, especially as we explore the ways in which drama focused on morality, ethics, the righteousness of the gods, and justice. As a philosopher, Sophocles tended to offer open-ended resolutions

rather than the more obvious right or wrong outcomes. Morality and solid argument often lay on both sides of an argument, leaving to the audience the struggle with the greater ethical questions.

- 1) The plot of *Antigone* is the struggle of the individual against the *polis* – an ongoing theme in much of Sophocles' drama. Analyze the moral and ethical arguments of both Creon and Antigone. Which do you think had the stronger moral/ethical position? In formulating your answer consider the importance of the following (sometimes conflicting) needs: love, laws of the polis, familial obligations, divine edicts, security, morality, duty, and individual vs. community needs and interests. Support your argument.
- 2) Compare and contrast Creon's first speech (the edict on Polynices and the policies of a wise ruler) with Pericles' Funeral Oration (Thucydides) which can be found at the following web site:
<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/GREECE/PERICLES.HTM>
- 3) Traditionally, Greek tragic scenes consisted of two actors and the chorus. Sophocles introduced a third actor. Find and analyze a triangular scene noting the following:
 - The three characters involved in the scene
 - The focus of the scene (what is being discussed?)
 - Are the characters really listening to and reacting to what the others are saying or simply answering each argument by restating their preconceived stand on the issue?
 - Do the characters see words (love, death, duty, law) in the same way or do these words have different meanings to each?
 - What is the climax of the scene?
 - How does this scene lead logically to the next scene?
 - Do any of the characters change as a result of the scene?
 - Does the chorus contribute to the understanding of the scene?
- 4). The "choral picture of man" (the second long choral piece in the play) addresses themes relating to the characters, but also universal themes about humanity including the capabilities and limits of man. What is the image of man presented here? To whom is this choral song addressed? Prior to the entrance of the guard, do you think the chorus knows the identity of the person who committed the crime?
- 5). Each play has only one *protagonist* or first actor. Who is the protagonist in this play?
- 6). The final choral song addresses the price of pride. Whose pride was greatest? Did pride overwhelm the good qualities and honorable intentions of the character you selected? Did justice prevail in regard to any character in this play?

Throughout history societies and individuals were forced to look at their own lives in relation to the larger society and wrestle with moral/ethical decisions. Our own national history offers examples of people weighing individual interests/moral codes with those of the larger society. The American Revolution, the Civil War, the Great

Depression, Vietnam, Civil Rights, and our own post-9/11 situation. Could the themes and relationships that appear in *Antigone* be applied to a dramatic production addressing one of these events? Brainstorm to think of a plot line, characters, etc.

Grade 12

Lesson Nine:

***Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles**

Goal:

The learner will improve comprehension and critical thinking skills and gain knowledge of themselves as world citizens through response to ancient literary texts.
(Review drama background information for grades 10 & 12 above)

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, the learner will meet 12th grade Tennessee Language Arts Standards in the following ways:

- Recognize the influence of an author's background, gender, environment, audience, and experience on a literary work.
- Interact with the text to form personal, reasonable interpretations.
- Interpret ideas, recognize logical relationships, and make judgments based on sufficient evidence.
- Use cognitive strategies to evaluate text critically.
- Respond to literature by making personal, historical, and visual connections.

Activities:

- 1). After reading the play, explore the life and teachings of Sophocles and point out obvious influences within the play that reflect the author's background, gender, environment, audience and experience. Are there portions of the play seeming to be at odds with Sophocles' own views and teachings or is the play a clear reflection of his teachings?
- 2). The following exercise allows students an opportunity to formulate and build an argument supporting their interpretation of this tragedy. Students select from one of the following theories:
 - A) The "Oedipus Complex" theory. This play is a morality tale judging incestuous relationships.
 - B) The "Fatal Flaw" theory. The tragedy is the result of a fatal flaw in the protagonist.
 - C) The "Chaos" theory. This tragedy is the interplay of a number of factors –fate, actions based on little or no evidence, a combination of characteristics inherent in the protagonist, complex and conflicting interpretations of words, the intervention of the gods, etc.Support your selection with examples from the play.

- 3). Select and evaluate one of the following elements from the play: prophecy and fate, oracles, curses and riddles, messengers, and the intervention of the gods. Explore the importance of this element to the success of the play, as a crucial ingredient to the tragic outcome, and as a dramatic effect (making visual connections) in the play.
- 4). *Finding the truth whatever the cost and accepting responsibility* are considered character strengths in our society. Using this tragedy and pulling in other contemporary examples, explore the wisdom of this statement as a universal code of ethics.
- 5). Compare the role of paradox and fate in *Oedipus the King* and *Macbeth*.
- 6). Compare and contrast the protagonist in *Oedipus the King* and *Macbeth*.

Language Arts Sources:

Books:

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